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ABSTRACT

Beginning school teachers (N=13), beginning school librarians (N=2), mentor teachers (N=13), and a mentor counselor were interviewed to elicit their perceptions of the personal and general educational benefits of a state-mandated mentoring program. Cited benefits of mentoring for the beginner included: (1) encouragement and support, particularly emotional support; (2) help with the logistics associated with working in a rule-dominated school setting; and (3) help with curriculum and teaching. Cited benefits of mentoring for the mentor included: (1) personal enjoyment; (2) contributing to the profession; (3) rejuvenation and reflection; and (4) learning about new ideas, theories, and techniques from the beginner. Most of the mentors did not favor financial rewards for mentors. In contrast, most of the beginners favored some kind of external reward for mentors. Subjects also provided their views on benefits of mentoring for schools, districts, and children. (IAH)

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The Benefits of Mentoring as Viewed by Beginning Teachers and Mentors in a State-Mandated Mentoring Program

(Draft)

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February 18, 1992

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Background

In the mid-1980s the state legislation of a centrally located state passed an educational reform act. One provision of this act requires school districts to establish mentoring programs for beginning school teachers, counselors, and librarians during their first year of employment. "Beginning" is defined to include experienced personnel who are new to a district or who are re-entering the workplace after several years' absence, in addition to those who are starting their career.

Although the act requires districts to establish mentoring programs, little funding is provided to cover associated costs, and little direction is given in formulating program goals, design, implementation, or evaluation. The reform act called for school districts to pilot a mentoring program during 1988-89 and to have a program in place by the beginning of the 1989-90 school year.

Participants and Study Design

Participants

The participants in this study include 13 mentor teachers and one mentor counselor, and 13 beginning teachers and two beginning librarians, from three different school districts. These persons were identified by school officials as having participated in a mentoring program during 1989-90. Harrison is an urban district, Pierce is a suburban district, and Fillmore is a rural district. Selected characteristics of these districts is provided in Table 1.

mentors], (4) factors used in matching beginners and mentors, and (5) benefits and problems of mentoring programs.

Data analysis

Interview transcriptions and notes based on interviews were read three times for emergent categories (Lofland & Lofland, 1984; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Preliminary categories were expanded or collapsed, and criteria for inclusion of data in categories were established. This process resulted in six major categories, each containing two or more sub-categories:

(1) mentor characteristics [2 sub-categories],

(2) mentor roles [9 sub-categories],

(3) matching factors [6 sub-categories],

(4) features of formal mentoring programs [7 sub-categories],

(5) benefits of mentor programs [9 sub-categories], and

(6) potential problems of mentor programs [3 sub-categories].

Transcriptions and notes were read again in preparing this paper. A computer program was used to facilitate the mechanical process of coding transcriptions, and the sorting and retrieval of coded segments (Seidel, Kjolseth, & Seymour, 1988).

Benefits for the Beginner

During the interviews, participants were directly asked to describe what they believe to be the primary benefits of mentoring programs for the beginners and for the mentors. They also described other benefits of mentoring, in conjunction with this portion of the

interview, and at other times during the interview.

Having a support person

The most commonly cited benefit of mentoring for the beginner is the availability of someone who offers support and encouragement. Lisa says, "You have someone to identify with you, to empathize with you, to offer possible solutions, to give you moral support, and someone [who] could also remind you that 'Yes, the first year is always rough. Hang in there. You will survive.'" *(Note: In order to clarify the sources of information, the pseudonyms for the mentors are written in all capital letters [e.g., NINA], while only the first letter of the pseudonyms for the beginners is capitalized [e.g., Zoe].)* Rachel makes a similar comment when she notes that having a mentor meant "I wasn't going to be alone in all this. Everything is so overwhelming." Like the beginners, the mentors emphasize the importance of the mentor "being there" for the beginner. TAMMI draws a graphic analogy in this regard. She observes, "For the beginner, of course, I just think it's the feeling that they are not drowning, that there really is . . . maybe not a life preserver as much as a tree that they can hold to that's above the water, a piece of solid ground that they can somehow use to get their footing to plunge back in."

Participants tend to define support for beginners as emotional rather than instructional. For example, SUE describes this support as "Knowing that there's somebody that that person can turn to and they're not going to be made fun of for not knowing how things work." Other descriptions of this support include "Reassurance that you get from your mentor" (Mary) and "Somebody to turn to in any situation" (Zoe).

These support functions can be differentiated between those in which a beginner

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Insert Table 1 about here

The participants are predominantly female and white, although they differ considerably in age, teaching experience, and school level. Selected information about the participants is provided in Tables 2 and 3.

Insert Table 2 about here

Insert Table 3 about here

Data collection

Between May 29 and June 14, 1990, each participant was interviewed one time. Twenty-six interviews were tape-recorded. The interviews ranged from 16 to 51 minutes in length, and averaged 29 minutes for both the beginners and the mentors. Three participants preferred that their interviews not be tape-recorded. In these cases notes were taken during the interviews and later expanded. Transcriptions of the tape-recordings were prepared.

The interviews were semi-structured and included questions related to (1) the mentor's prior experience in formal and informal mentoring situations, or the beginner's teacher preparation program and work schedule, (2) characteristics of effective mentoring programs, (3) specific features of mentoring programs [e.g., physical proximity of beginners and

comes to the mentor to seek advice or to work out a problem in confidence, and those in which the mentor provides the beginner with general encouragement.

As an example of the first of these variations of support, Gail describes the principal benefit of mentoring for the beginner as "The opportunity to bring problems, concerns and questions, specific questions, to the mentor and [to] have an opportunity to discuss those and look for solutions to them, together, and try to work them out." NANCY believes that an important benefit of mentoring for the beginner is knowing "There's someone back there if you make a mistake that you can call and say, 'Hey, what do I do about this and how can I handle this situation.'" That this knowledge is important for beginners is evident in Carol's observation that having a mentor shows "That somebody cares, that not everybody out there is out to get you, because you tend to get a little paranoid, too."

With respect to the second type of support, some participants suggest that beginners benefit by having a mentor who acts as a cheerleader. They describe the mentor as "bolstering" or "boosting" up the beginner. "I think that's a big thing for the new teacher," comments Nora. "Just giving them that extra boost of self confidence to try some things and to fail and then to go on." Ursula makes a similar observation: "They can bolster you up. A couple times, I went to her and I said, 'I am doing this all wrong. I can't handle this. There's something that's not working.' And she would say, 'Hey, this is your first year. . . . Give yourself a break. You are doing terrific and keeping up.'"

Help with school "logistics"

Participants also describe as an important benefit of mentoring for beginners the help they receive related to the "logistics" of working in a school setting dominated by "rules,

regulations, and procedures" (IRMA). For example, EVE suggests that a mentor can help a beginner develop skills not addressed in pre-service training. As an example, she says, "Record keeping. You can't learn record keeping in college because that's so individualized by building and school system. How are they going to learn it? . . . This is a valuable reason for the mentor." SUE reflects the belief of many participants that this sort of help may be the most important benefit of mentoring for beginners. She says, "Maybe this sounds really terrible, but for a beginning teacher the main thing to worry about probably for the first three months is just how to get around the school and how to take care of the day-to-day business that's so automatic for the rest of us. And then you can be kind of worried about teaching. That's just part of being a new teacher." The beginners express a similar point of view. Cathy sees mentoring as helping beginners so that "At least they wouldn't be lost, and they would know what was going on with the paperwork and all that." Some of the assistance mentors provide is general, as evident in Nora's reference to mentors' helping beginners with "the basic routines," but it can also be quite specific. For instance, Becky views an important benefit of mentoring as receiving guidance in applying for state and federal grants related to vocational home economics education.

Help with curriculum and teaching

Many participants indicate that benefits of mentoring for the beginning teachers also relate more directly to their work as teachers. For example, both IRMA and SUE describe the mentor as someone that the beginner can "bounce ideas off." Similarly, Connie believes that mentoring is valuable for the beginner by providing the chance for "sharing different ideas for how you do things in a classroom or philosophies." Additional topics mentioned

include such things as "sharing the knowledge of subject matter" (NINA), dealing with parents (ORA), grading policies (Mary), and lesson planning (Lisa). Rachel sees the mentor as "someone to talk to besides the teacher's guide," and Lisa sees mentors as serving beginners by allowing them access to "their own personal files and materials."

Despite references among the participants linking mentoring with teaching skills, relatively few participants suggest a direct connection between mentoring activities and improvement of the beginner's teaching performance. There are, however, some exceptions to this. MARGE, for example, comments, "Hopefully we'll make them a better teacher," and RUTH emphasizes that mentoring should aim at improving the beginner's "competency." Likewise, Gina views mentoring as providing her with an opportunity to "be better" as a teacher, and Nora views mentoring as giving the experienced teacher a chance "to help another teacher become a successful teacher."

There are also a few occasions when participants suggest that mentoring benefits beginners by helping them to adjust their professional expectations. For instance, RITA relates discussing with her beginning teacher the need to realize that lesson plans may not always be carried out as intended. She says, "I tried to help her in the very beginning to have a lesson plan for every day. I said this is important, but keep in mind that that lesson plan can change. Somebody has a dog that dies, mother goes to the hospital, I said any number of things can just change your whole day and you have to be prepared to roll with it." Nora points out that a mentor can help the beginner to realize that low test scores are not necessarily an indication of the beginner's shortcomings: "The test scores come back and it's like, 'Oh my gosh, did I do this all wrong?' It's just nice for someone to say, 'No, you

should expect eight percent of your kids to not do well on this.' . . . Letting them know they're doing things all right."

The mentor as a willing helper

Regardless if the mentor offers the beginner advice about routine paperwork matters or serves as someone with whom the beginner can discuss the subject matter of an upcoming lesson, the participants agree that having a specific person to whom the beginner can turn to in these and other matters is a very significant benefit of mentoring for beginners. The fact that mentors have experienced firsthand the "pitfalls" (LORI) of teaching and have "been there" (EVE) in terms of feeling frustrated, upset, and discouraged about teaching is important; however, what is more critical is that they have willingly agreed to open their doors--and their experiences--to the beginner. Heather describes the mentor as "That one connection that you have in the faculty that you believe is concerned with you." Importantly, going to a mentor is safe for beginners, in terms of talking about failures and in not feeling that they are imposing on the mentor. Among the participants, the beginners are especially vocal in this regard. "You can ask this person questions that you might be embarrassed to ask somebody else," observes Carol. "For instance, where are the pencils? Do we have paper clips? Which bathroom do I use?" Gina is even more direct about this, commenting, "I think a mentor can serves as some sense of relief for the other teacher. They know there's somebody they can go ask and kind of [have] an unconditional relationship. They're not going to say, 'Well, you idiot.'" Moreover, as Debby stresses, beginners can be at ease in approaching their mentors, because mentoring is something that they accept freely as their job. IRMA makes this point as well: "For the beginner also it

gives them a sense of stability to know that they have somebody that they can call upon. There is somebody there whose, quote, 'job,', [whose] decision [is] to help them. You don't feel like you're honing in on this other person. You feel like, yes, they are called my mentor, and we've sat down and talked already; they've assured me that I am theirs [and] I can come to them."

Benefits for the Mentor

The participants in this study consistently suggest that the benefits of mentoring for the mentor are at least as great, if not even greater, than the benefits for the beginner.

Enjoyment

Beginners and mentors alike frequently suggest that mentors enjoy the process of working with a beginner. NINA says, "I enjoyed it," and SUE says, "I would do it because I like working with beginning teachers." Zoe believes that mentors benefit from mentoring because they know that "You helped someone else." IRMA goes a step further, suggesting that teachers enjoy being mentors by predisposition: "Teachers basically enjoy helping people, otherwise we wouldn't be teachers. We enjoy feeling needed," and EVE believes she would serve as a mentor even if mentoring were not a formal program. She says, "I enjoy doing it and I think one reason they asked me to do it is because I probably do these things automatically anyway." In a similar vein, Carol believes experienced teachers decide to be mentors because they "Love teaching and love kids and want to encourage." On occasion, participants also suggest that working with beginning teachers provides mentors with an opportunity to affirm their own expertise. For instance, Rachel observes that a

mentor's teaching a beginning teacher some skill or technique means that the mentor has mastered the skill or technique in the first place. In working with a beginner, IRMA finds reinforcement for her own ideas about teaching. She says: "I think . . . sharing your ideas is always fun, seeing them put into effect. [That] somebody's actually trying them and it's working for them also gives you feedback. You know, it worked for me, it worked for them, I'm going to keep up, doing this sort of thing, because it's not just me. It really is a good concept. It really is a good idea."

Paying back the profession

Several mentors argue strongly that an important benefit of mentoring for experienced teachers is the opportunity it affords them to "give back" something important to the profession of teaching. "I feel like I owe my profession something," comments ORA, "and if this is the way I can give it back, that's terrific." Similarly, LORI notes that "Sometimes you need to give yourself to your work." Helping a beginner can also be a chance for experienced teachers to repay their profession for the help they received in the beginning. In this regard, MARGE recalls, "I remember myself being in the same position, and luckily I had someone I could go to with anything that I needed. You know, I just feel like it's a thing as a professional that I need to do for these people." Participants also suggest that mentors enjoy facilitating the beginner's early experiences. As TAMMI says, "I think for the mentor, of course, there's the intrinsic value of knowing that your suffering has spared someone else's suffering, [that] they are not going to have to suffer quite as much as you did."

Rejuvenation and reflection

Although suggesting that mentoring benefits mentors in these personal ways, the participants generally emphasize other benefits of mentoring for the experienced teacher even more so. They believe that mentoring benefits experienced teachers by giving them a chance to be rejuvenated in their work, to reflect on their work, and to improve their work. For example, both Becky and RUTH argue that working with a beginning teacher can provide an experienced teacher with a "shot in the arm." SUE sees in mentoring the opportunity for mentors to "get that fresh blood" that can be instrumental in helping them to "get out of the rut." Similarly, DIANE believes that mentors can catch the enthusiasm that new teachers bring to their work. Finally, RUTH readily admits that serving as a mentor "Rejuvenated me as a teacher. And it made me feel useful, more self-confident."

Often accompanying the rejuvenation that mentors experience in working with beginners is the process of reflecting on themselves and their work as teachers. This reflecting is described by participants as a pleasant one though not necessarily an easy one. The potential power of this experience is very evident in TAMMI's remarks: "It's really made me more reflective on my own teaching, made [me] more clear about my priorities, what's important to me in a classroom, why I do the things I do and why they work and maybe why they work for me and don't work for someone else. . . . I think there's something wrong with being comfortable. . . . I've got my own little world here. I think you can get too secure. I think you can get too safe in your own little world and so having this stranger, who is going through all that stuff that I've buried so deep down, having to relive that, I think that somehow makes you more aware, more vital, more alive. I do think

all these people who've taught school for 15 years need someone to open their eyes again a little bit." Becky believes that a beginner can challenge a mentor by bringing a fresh awareness of problems which the mentor no longer sees, and Carol suggests that a positive outcome of mentoring for the experienced teacher is values clarification, saying, "Sometimes by mentoring, when you have to clarify your own values and your own goals, you have to put them in words for somebody else. Then that makes you see it more clearly." Nevertheless, as IRMA emphasizes, this process can be difficult: "This has forced me to try and go back to scratch, and try to think, how did I get from there to here? What were some of the things that I have learned that got me from there to here? . . . It's really been kind of fun in a sense, having to go back, but it's also been very frustrating. It's just like teaching. You don't think about vowels any more, and nouns and verbs. It's just--you talk, you write." As ANN suggests, mentoring a beginner keeps a mentor "On your toes."

New ideas

Mentors and beginners agree that an important benefit of mentoring for the experienced teacher serving as a mentor is learning about new ideas, theories, and techniques from the beginner. In fact, RUTH says it is for this reason that she agrees to serve as a mentor in the first place. She says, "I do it because I want to keep myself ahead. I want to be involved and I want to know what's going on." In general, participants underscore that working with a beginner exposes the mentor to "new ways to do things" (Gina) or to "some of the educational theories that the mentor may not have had contact with" (Lisa). But beyond exposure to new ideas, the participants also emphasize that mentors benefit by learning from the beginner. RITA says, "I have learned from her [new ways to group

children and techniques of cooperative learning] because she is a new teacher with new ideas, and it's been a few years since I have been back to a formal class," and LORI says, "She had a lot of super new ideas, which is good for me. I learned a lot from her." Debby believes that a beginner's strength in a content area can prove beneficial to the mentor "if that's one of your weak points" and Ursula cites specific examples of how she helped her mentor in working with children with special needs. Finally, NANCY emphasizes that she was still able to learn valuable things from the counselor which whom she was working, even though he was an experienced counselor who was new to her district. She says, "He hadn't had new training, but at least he brought in a wealth of new knowledge of what he was doing from some place else."

Extrinsic rewards

During the interviews, participants were asked to discuss extrinsic incentives or rewards for experienced teachers serving as mentors--additional payment, tuition vouchers, inservice credit. There is more and stronger difference of opinion on this matter than on any other topic discussed during the interviews. Among all the participants, RUTH is the most strongly in favor of significant financial incentives for mentoring. She says, "I think it should be money. I feel very strongly about that." However, it should be pointed out that RUTH is the only participant directly familiar with mentoring programs elsewhere in the country. She served as a mentor in a western state and received substantial additional pay for this work. TAMMI argues that institutionalizing a mentoring program in a school district requires rewarding mentors. She says, "I thought I was pretty well read up on it [mentoring] before I started, but the amount of hours was astonishing and, frankly, if the program is

going to survive there will have to be some type of reward."

Whereas most of the mentors do not favor financial rewards for mentors, most of the beginners advocate some sort of external reward for mentors. For example, Lisa says, "I would be most emphatically [in favor of] rewarding the mentors. . . . There definitely should be some form of reward." Some beginners offer pragmatic reasons for rewarding mentors. Carol believes that rewards might draw "an already overtaxed, underpaid teacher" to mentoring, while Gail believes that experienced teachers are unlikely to volunteer to serve as mentors if there is any kind of training involved. She says, "I would think, just from listening and looking at the teachers in our building, they're not going to want to go to workshops. They don't want to do anything outside of what they have to do. You're either going to have to pay them to be a mentor that year or something else like that."

The beginners and mentors who are at least somewhat supportive of financial or related incentives for mentors suggest that this a complex issue. For instance, Zoe says, "I'm a beginning teacher, so I don't really know if it's really for me to say, but I mean sometimes it's frustrating that everything has to be extra, that you have to pay people extra. But I see the point, because if you have a family and you're taking that extra time, then you should get something in return . . . especially if it's going to take a lot of extra time . . . beyond the regular school day." Most commonly, incentives for mentors are described as something nice but unnecessary. For example, Heather thinks that a financial incentive "Would be nice because it's extra work" and EVE observes, "That would be an added bonus, yes, because in the program we have now it's strictly volunteer basis. It's the same pat-on-the-back type of work in many instances, but, sure, any incentive would be

welcomed." Some participants suggest that rewards are appropriate only if more is expected of the mentor. For example, BRUCE feels that "There should be some reimbursement" if mentors are expected to follow established guidelines and reach pre-determined goals, adding, "Our society expects rewards for additional work except in the teaching world."

In general, most participants do not believe that significant extrinsic rewards or incentives are desirable or even appropriate. On the one hand, some participants do not believe that the responsibilities of mentors are extensive enough to warrant reward. In this regard, Becky comments, "I mean, how long does it take to answer questions? . . . I wouldn't feel that [extra pay for mentors] would be fair to me at all this year, because I feel like I answered three-fourths of my own questions," and TAMMI observes, "Being able to share the experience they have gained, to me that doesn't call for any extra financial [incentive]." On the other hand, SUE says that she does not think "People who are truly interested in working with beginning teachers need anything like that [i.e., financial incentives]." Similarly, Ursula contends, "The kind of person you want for a mentor is someone that doesn't really need the reimbursements."

The strongest argument offered against creating significant financial rewards for mentors is that this would attract experienced teachers to mentoring for the wrong reason. For example, ANN believes that if significant extra pay for mentors is involved in mentoring program, "Everyone will want to be a mentor, whether they're mentor material or not." Similarly, MARGE says, "I can see a lot of people coming out of the woodwork to volunteer for a program." Some beginners are also hesitant to involve extra pay for mentors. Ursula asks, "If you have someone coming in and doing it strictly for the money, then you run into,

'Are they doing it on a basis of having to get paid for this, and will they really follow through with the person that they're helping?'" Connie cites an example of a situation that she sees as analogous to offering mentors extra pay: "I know teacher that would, most of us would, do almost anything for a little extra money. Like my son, who was in seventh grade, had a teacher who came to school deathly ill for five days because he wanted that $200 bonus at the end of the year. I mean he was not going to miss one day. I think that's what they were offering, $200 for perfect attendance."

Benefits for schools, districts, and children

The design of this study required the participants to comment on the benefits of mentoring for beginners and for mentors. Nevertheless, although not specifically asked to do so, the participants shared their perspectives on additional benefits of mentoring. Most of these comments focus on the benefits of mentoring for schools and school districts.

Participants suggest a number of ways in which mentoring can benefit schools and school districts. For example, they point out that building principals are less likely to be called upon to answer beginners' questions when they are working with a mentor. ANN suggests that a mentoring program allows a beginning teacher to ask things of the mentor which may seen too insignificant to ask of the principal. Debby makes a similar point as she describes the advantage of her mentor's classroom being right next door to hers. She notes, "There are lots of times teaching elementary school where things come up [at the] last minute, and you need an answer immediately, right now. I mean, it's not important enough to bother the principal with it."

Several participants believe mentoring benefits schools by facilitating the beginner's integration into the faculty. Describing the benefits of mentoring for the beginner, Connie says, "It's kind of obvious. The beginning teacher would not feel so out of touch. She'd feel more at home in the new situation." Similarly, Heather describes this benefit of mentoring as "easing you into the situation." Mentors can facilitate this process because they generally understand beginners' experiences better than faculty who have no experience as mentors. For example, Connie believes that mentoring gives the mentor an opportunity to recall "what it's like to be brand new in a situation," and Ursula thinks that working with her enabled her mentor to become "a little bit more aware of where people are coming from when they first come into the new system."

Several participants believe that mentoring benefits the entire school by reducing the isolation that beginners may experience without mentoring. MARGE says, "For the beginner I hope it makes them feel for comfortable in the school environment. They know if they have a problem there's someone they can go to. They don't feel so isolated. This is probably the biggest benefit, just that, to make them feel more comfortable in their new working environment." Some mentors also emphasize that mentoring breaks down isolation for mentors as well. "It also forces you to get out of your room," observes RUTH, "and to work more with other people and really get involved in their teaching." SUE also sees this as an important benefit of mentoring: "We need to share more about what we're doing in our classrooms. We tend to be real isolated. And that would help all of us, not just the beginning teacher."

Participants cite another benefit of mentoring for schools and school systems as

reducing "burn-out" among beginners, and ultimately their attrition rate. DIANE comments, "I think you could probably cut teacher burn-out rate, I would say, at least 25 to 30%. I truly believe that." Similarly, ANN believes that a mentoring program can help beginners "to realize their strengths and their weaknesses," and to avoid a situation in which they "want out without giving it a good shot."

Two participants suggest that the children in the classrooms of the beginners are important beneficiaries of mentoring programs. After enumerating several benefits of mentoring, RUTH adds, "All of that in turn helps the children, which is why we're there." Lisa also believes that mentoring "Provides a more stable first year teaching experience for the students. The students benefit. They're exposed to perhaps less experimental trial and error." When mentoring occurs, Lisa suggests, "You have a beginning teacher who has the benefit of the techniques, who is exposed to or given suggestions, that another teacher has evolved over several years, and [that] the beginning teacher would probably take a like amount of time to develop on her own." For the most part, however, participants seldom suggest a direct connection between mentoring and improved instruction for the children in classes of beginning teachers.

Discussion

The beginners and mentors interviewed in this study participated in a state-mandated mentoring program. Except for TAMMI, who had taken a university course on mentoring, and RUTH, who had served as a mentor in another state, participants had very little training or background in mentoring. Moreover, despite the fact that each participant was identified

by school officials as being part of a mentoring "program," several participants were not entirely clear about this. Generally speaking, their essentially "untrained" perceptions of the benefits of mentoring programs for beginning teachers and for mentors are consistent with the literature on mentoring and mentoring programs (e.g. Bey & Holmes, 1990; Huling-Austin, 1990; McKenna, 1990, California Department of Education, 1992, January). Part of this consistency is their decided emphasis on the emotional support which mentoring offers beginners, and the opportunity for rejuvenation and learning that it offers experienced teachers serving as mentors. To a far lesser degree do the participants suggest that mentoring benefits beginning teachers by directly improving their teaching, or that it benefits children by improving their learning. Despite the notion that improved instruction and enhanced learning are significant outcomes of mentoring programs--outcomes which are often used to warrant considerable investment of limited resources--it appears that most of these participants do not see these as prominent benefits of mentoring.

As noted above, the participants in this study were only asked to comment on benefits of mentoring for beginners and mentors, and so their remarks on other benefits of mentoring arose more indirectly. Had the questions about benefits been more open-ended, the participants may have said different things. However, the investigator believes that this probably would not have been the case. Nearing the end of the first of two meetings with 24 experienced (and often formally trained) mentors for the purpose of exploring their beliefs regarding the roles of mentors, obstacles to mentoring, and benefits of mentoring, a similar pattern emerges. That is, when asked to talk about the benefits of mentoring in general, these mentors emphasize similar benefits of mentoring--support for the beginner and

rejuvenation and new ideas for the mentor.

Something else may account for the focus of the participants of this study regarding the benefits of mentoring. Their view about mentoring is limited to a mentoring relationship established for one year. Research on the development of beginning teachers suggests that during the first year of teaching, concerns about "self" and about "survival" predominate (e.g. Feiman-Nemser, 1983; Fuller & Bown, 1975; Veenman, 1984). Accordingly, emotional support and encouragement are likely to be what beginners seek and what mentors are most comfortable in offering. In subsequent years of teaching, the needs and concerns of beginners are likely to shift to topics and skills more directly related to teaching--planning, sequence of curriculum, instructional strategies, etc. At this point, beginners and mentors alike are likely to suggest a different--or at least more comprehensive--set of benefits of mentoring. However, a mentoring program of a brief duration may not provide enough time for this change in emphasis to occur.

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Table 1

School District Characteristics

	Characteristics					
District	Enrollment	Elementary Schools	Junior Hi Schools	High Schls	Teaching Staff	Average Salary[1]
Harrison	20,000 to 25,000	40-50	6-10	6-10	1,000 to 1,500	$28,000
Pierce	1,000 to 2,000	1-5	1-5	1-5	100-200	$25,000
Fillmore	< 1,000	1-5	0	1-5	< 50	$20,000

[1] Instructors, certified staff, and administrators

Table 2

Mentors--Selected Characteristics

	Characteristics					
Mentor	Sex[1]	Race[2]	Age range	School level	Teaching experience (in years)	School district
NINA	F	Wh	46-55	Elementary	16-20	Fillmore
SUE	F	Wh	26-35	Secondary	1-5	Harrison
TAMMI	F	Wh	26-35	Secondary	11-15	Pierce
RITA	F	Wh	> 56	Elementary	26-30	Harrison
DIANE	F	Wh	46-55	Elementary	31-35	Harrison
NANCY	F	Wh	36-45	Elementary Counselor	11-15	Harrison
IRMA	F	Wh	36-45	Elementary	21-25	Harrison
ORA	F	Wh	36-45	Elementary	16-20	Harrison
LORI	F	Wh	46-55	Elementary	11-15	Harrison
BRUCE	M	Wh	> 56	Secondary	36-40	Fillmore
ANN	F	Wh	46-55	Elementary	11-15	Harrison
MARGE	F	Wh	36-45	Elementary	16-20	Harrison
EVE	F	Wh	36-45	Elementary	16-20	Harrison
RUTH	F	Wh	36-45	Elementary	21-25	Harrison

[1] F = Female M = Male [2] Wh = White

Table 3

Beginners--Selected Characteristics

	Characteristics					
Beginner	Sex[1]	Race[2]	Age range	School level	Teaching experience (in years)	School district
Zoe	F	Wh	< 26	Secondary	1-5	Harrison
Ursula	F	Wh	36-45	Elementary Librarian	0	Pierce
Heather	F	Wh	36-45	Secondary	0	Harrison
Lucy	F	Wh	46-55	Elementary	0	Harrison
Mary	F	As	36-45	Secondary	6-10	Harrison
Debby	F	Wh	36-45	Elementary	unknown	Harrison
Rachel	F	Wh	26-35	Secondary	0	Harrison
Carol	F	Wh	36-45	Jr High	0	Harrison
Connie	F	Wh	36-45	Elementary	1-5	Harrison
Becky	F	Wh	26-35	Secondary	0	Fillmore
Gina	F	Wh	26-35	Secondary	1-5	Harrison
Nora	F	Wh	26-35	Elementary	0	Harrison
Lisa	F	Wh	36-45	Elementary Librarian	0	Harrison
Cathy	F	Wh	46-55	Elementary	0	Fillmore
Gail	F	Wh	36-45	Secondary	0	Harrison

[1] F = Female [2] Wh = White As = Asian